

HOW TO ESTABLISH A NEW DISCIPLINE?

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE OF THE PERIODICAL *HUNGARIAN JOURNAL OF DISABILITY STUDIES & SPECIAL EDUCATION* (*FOGYATÉKOSSÁG ÉS TÁRSADALOM*)

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS: COOPERATIVE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The first research

The first Disability Studies research was carried out in Hungary in the course of 1984, in the Cooperative Research Institute – lead by Director Antal Gyenes (member of the Imre Nagy government of 1956). The values it was based on would have qualified it as Disability Studies research. However, not even the researcher called it a DS research – we did not use this term that time. That research focused on *the vocational rehabilitation of people with disabilities in (so called) industrial cooperatives*.

In Hungary as DS scholars, we use several definitions for our discipline. The shortest, four-elements-one, that I call *essential* definition of Disability Studies, is as follows.

- (i) It is a *critical social science*, that critically reflects onto the social world, and even onto itself (Critical Disability Studies).
- (ii) It is based on the experiences and the narratives (own voices) of persons with disabilities.
- (iii) It reconstructs and analyses hidden oppressive power structures in society (closely connected: the dominant discourse).
- (iv) Its communication, values, views etc. are all based on reverence towards persons with disabilities.

That very early research of 1984 did not have all these four characteristics, only *the first one* and *the fourth one*.

In the following decades several interdisciplinary research projects were carried out.

INTRODUCING NEW SOLUTIONS: EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY

Open Universities for Disability Studies

Since 2006, we, at Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty for Special Needs Education, organized three semesters of Open Universities for Disability Studies. The first focused on employment in the open labor market, the second on equal opportunities and the third on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We invited Hungarian and foreign professors (among others Amita Dhanda, Rosi Braidotti and Rosemary Garland Thomson, Tina Minkowitz). All of the three semesters were free of charge for everyone: persons with disabilities, professionals, employees of not for profit organizations. Attendance was higher than 100 persons each year.

The Hungarian language periodical

for Disability Studies and Special Education was founded in 2009. The periodical is based on voluntary work by the editors. An internationally recognized thinker of the discipline, and creative member of the International Disability Caucus (CRPD) Gábor Gombos served as a member of the Editorial Board for years.

Disability Studies Doctoral Workshop

In 2010 we founded the Disability Studies Doctoral Workshop that supports doctoral students, working on DS topics, based on DS values. We have 20 members – among them there are scholars with disabilities – and 7 of them already have PhDs. So DSDW has partly become a Disability Studies (Post)Doctoral Workshop.

Annual Conferences of Disability Studies

We have been organizing Annual Conferences of Disability Studies since 2013. Growing number of the attendance varies between 150–250. Internationally well known professors, e.g., Margrit Shildrick and Dan Goodley were already involved among other great researchers. Tom Shakespeare is invited to be one of the keynote speakers of the Sixth Hungarian Conference of Disability Studies in November 2018.

Hungarian Society for Disability Studies

was founded in 2015 as a Section for Disability Studies in the Hungarian Sociological Association.

Award winning participatory teaching

by teachers with and without disability has been carried out at our Faculty since 2015. Two institutes of the Faculty are involved in teaching and in *participatory research*. These are: the Institute for Disability and Social Participation and the Institute for General Theory of Special Needs Education.

A Fulbright scholar

Nancy Rice from the University of Wisconsin worked with us, while spending a semester at our Institute in 2017.

Taigetus II. research to understand the oppression of persons with disabilities

Teaching practice, as well as giving lectures at universities and international organizations led us to set up a research plan that was accepted and funded by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA, 111917K). This transdisciplinary research was carried out in the period of 2015–2017.

The PODIUM project to learn more about the process of deinstitutionalization

We participated in the Path of Deinstitutionalization – Urgent Moves programme and developed the ‘Theory and Practice of Supported Living’ inclusive seminar. This international, inclusive project was funded by the Erasmus+ programme and was carried out in the period of 2015–2018. Our work is not only innovative because it uses modern pedagogical tools such as project method, cooperative learning, and the team teaching model, but because the curriculum developers were the first to use the award winning inclusive methodology in higher education in Hungary.

Out of all of the above we introduce two fundamental elements of our most recent achievements in this special issue.

In the first part we articulate some results of our Taigetus research, and in the second part we present the PODIUM training development project. The authors are indebted to the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund and to Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty for Special Needs Education, ELTE for their valuable support.

György Könczei